



EPILEPSY YORK REGION

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ABSENCE SEIZURE: often called petit mal seizure. A brief seizure (under 20 seconds) that can include staring, blinking and automatic gestures. Common in children with epilepsy.

AURA: feelings or movements that are part of a simple partial seizure, and may precede a generalized seizure. An aura may include odd actions, visions, sounds, or feelings of déjà vu (the sensation of encountering circumstances or a place previously experienced).

CLONIC SEIZURE: one that includes jerking movements in part or all of the body.

COMPLEX PARTIAL SEIZURE: one that impairs consciousness and affects only part of the brain. It may follow a simple partial seizure.

COMPUTERIZED AXIAL TOMOGRAPHY (CT) SCAN: also called a CAT scan. An x-ray technique that uses a computer to create a detailed picture of a cross-section of the brain.

CONSCIOUSNESS: state of awareness or alertness.

ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAM (EEG): indirect measurement of brain electrical activity as recorded at the skin surface. Often used to help diagnose epilepsy.

EPILEPSY: disorder characterized by recurrent seizures. Also called a seizure disorder.

GENERALIZED SEIZURE: one that involves the entire brain.

GRAND MAL: see Tonic Clonic seizure

KETOGENIC DIET: specific high-fat, low-carbohydrate diet sometimes used to control seizures in children after other measures have failed.

MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING (MRI): scanning test that uses a strong magnet to create images to detect structural abnormalities in the brain.

MENINGITIS: inflammation or infection of the covering of the brain. May be viral, bacterial or fungal. May lead to seizures.

MYCLONIC SEIZURE: brief muscle jerk caused by an abnormal electrical discharge in the brain.

NEUROLOGIST: doctor who specializes in brain disorders and other disorders of the nervous system.

NEURONS: nerve cells that communicate through electrical messages.

NOCTURNAL SEIZURE: one that occurs when a person is falling asleep, awakening or sleeping.

PARTIAL SEIZURE: one that involves only part of the brain.

PETIT MAL: see Absence Seizure.

PHOTOSENSITIVITY: tendency to react to certain types of lights (including flashing or blinking lights), which can trigger a seizure.

POSITRON EMISSION TOMOGRAPHY (PET): computer imaging technique that uses low-energy radiation to show brain chemical activity.

SEIZURE: sudden discharge of electrical activity in the brain that causes changes in behaviour, consciousness or perception.

SEIZURE THRESHOLD: level at which the brain's electrical activity causes a seizure.

SIMPLE PARTIAL SEIZURE: one that does not impair consciousness and affects only part of the brain.

STROKE: abnormal condition arising from insufficient blood flow to the brain, or from brain hemorrhage. A frequent cause of seizure.

TONIC CLONIC SEIZURE: formerly called a grand mal seizure. One that involves stiffening of the body and muscle jerks. May require medical attention.

TONIC SEIZURE: one that causes rigidity on both sides of the body.

Information provided is not intended to replace any medical advice provided by your physician or neurologist. It is intended to supply general information on epilepsy and seizures. For further medical information or specific diagnostic questions, please refer your concerns to your physician or neurologist.



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